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UNCLAS ZAGREB 001441

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [KAWC](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: PETRAC ARREST SEEN AS PROGRESS TOWARD GOTOVINA

1. (SBU) The August 31 arrest in Greece of fugitive Croatian businessman and organized crime figure Hrvoje Petrac is widely perceived in Croatia as another step in the GoC's plan to put pressure on war crimes indictee Ante Gotovina. As a close Gotovina associate, Petrac is thought to have financed Gotovina's flight. Petrac himself was arrested on a warrant connected with his conviction in absentia for a 2004 kidnapping.

2. (U) President Mesic told the press Petrac's arrest was "proof that Croatian services cannot do much if a fugitive is in another country" (justifying the lack of success in locating Gotovina), but complimented Croatian authorities on taking the initiative to seek assistance foreign services. PM Sanader, speaking in Gdansk, Poland, linked Petrac's arrest directly to the GoC's "Action Plan" for achieving full cooperation with the ICTY, asserting that the Action Plan had yielded results and this should be taken into account when assessing Croatia's cooperation.

3. (SBU) Charge congratulated the MFA on this arrest and expressed the hope that the authorities can use the momentum generated by the Petrac arrest to continue wrapping up Gotovina's financial support network and keep up the pressure on Gotovina to appear in the Hague, which is the only way to achieve "full cooperation" with the ICTY.

4. (U) We propose the following points as press guidance:

-- The U.S. welcomes the arrest on August 30 by Greek authorities of Hrvoje Petrac.

-- We encourage the Government of Croatia to use this momentum to pursue completion of its action plan.

-- The U.S. continues to call on Croatia to fulfill its international obligations to the ICTY. This includes the apprehension and transfer of Ante Gotovina to the Hague.

-- Only the appearance of Gotovina in the Hague constitutes full cooperation with the ICTY, which is necessary for Croatia to demonstrate the shared values necessary for integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

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